

**Top tips
to develop:**

Gross Motor Skills



Gross motor skills involve movements of the large muscles of the arms, legs and torso. Development of gross motor skills and bigger movements involve core stability, crossing the midline and using both sides of the body together.

Gross motor movements also encourage the development of pathways between the left and right hemispheres of the brain, essential for coordinating both eyes, both ears and both hands.

Muscle control generally develops from the top of the body downwards and from the centre outwards, which means that the fingers are one of the last muscles a child will have good control over. They need to develop gross motor control alongside fine motor control.

Gross motor skills develop other abilities such as balance, coordination, body awareness, physical strength and reaction time.

It very important for young children to have experiences that will develop their gross motor skills, as this can have an effect on children's handwriting ability later on.

- Encourage babies to lie on their tummies to play with toys for increasing periods of time under supervision.
- Ensure babies have the space and opportunity to roll, stretch, wriggle and crawl. Place a toy just out of reach to encourage the baby to stretch for the toy.
- Build towers of bricks higher than the child. Let them stand on something to help them reach when it becomes too big.
- Ball games - roll the ball to each other, throw and catch, pass the ball to each other with your foot, pass the ball over your heads and under your legs and find different ways to pass the ball.
- Make an obstacle course inside or outside. Find things that you can crawl through, move over, under, balance on, etc.
- Play hopscotch - with chalk draw squares numbered 1 to 10, take turns hopping/ jumping from squares 1-10.
- Play balloon tennis. Tap the balloon to each other and see if you can keep it from touching the floor.
- Bubbles - blow lots of bubbles, ask the children to pop the bubbles with one finger, reaching high and low - they could put one arm behind their back.
- Do the hokey cokey- sing action songs with big movements.
- Play parachute games.
- Pull and move large pieces of lycra material.
- Do some baking – lots of mixing and stirring.
- Water painting – draw large letters around the outdoor area then let the children wash them away with water and large paint brushes.
- Play “Simon said”. Stand on one foot, jump up and down, and touch your toes....
- Animal walks – do different animal walks, jump like a frog, walk like a monkey, bear, crab, mouse etc.
- Have a sports day - egg and spoon race, sack race, obstacle race etc.
- Cross body exercises – left hand to right foot, right elbow to left knee...